

THE ADMINISTRATION'S POLICIES

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I have requested to speak in morning business to talk about our President's policies, to talk about this administration and the policies that impact all Americans.

As we know, the Senate has convened at a very interesting, unique, if not sad, day in the history of this Nation's Presidency. I will not dwell on that. It would be very inappropriate for me to do so. What I do want to talk about is an agenda that we have attempted to handle appropriately on the floor for the last several weeks; that is, to do the business of this Congress and to do the business of Government, to move the appropriations bills in an orderly fashion as our public and as the citizens of this Nation expect of us.

For the last 2 weeks, we have attempted to deal with an appropriations bill appropriating money to the Interior Department and to its ancillary agencies, to in large part administer policy and manage the public land resources of this country. But anyone watching, and certainly the majority leader, who just left the floor, knows how frustrating it has been in an attempt to responsibly move this legislation, only to have our colleagues on the other side of the aisle largely oppose it. Oppose it because within the bill are corrective measures that reflect an attempt to adjust the misguided policies of this administration as it deals with our public land resources.

We have made proposed changes. Why? Because the people of the public land West are saying, "No longer does this administration reflect our interests or our concerns or our economies."

Why am I speaking uniquely to the West? The appropriations bill largely deals with western public land and States' interests. But in my State of Idaho, where 63 percent of the land base is owned by and managed by the Federal Government, public land policy is critical, and mine is only a 63-percent ownership. In other States, like Nevada, it is much higher. So goes the Federal Government, so manages the land, so goes the economy and the lifestyles and the character of those States.

I would like to spend the next few minutes discussing those policies and our concern about the attitude of this administration as it has impacted our policies.

The provisions that I am talking about in the appropriations bill, if we can ever get back to it, are necessary, in my view, and appropriate, because many of us feel this administration has gone around Congress, the States and the local officials in an effort to place broad restrictions on the use of public lands for productive economic use, such as mining and forest products and grazing and even recreation. Recreation, a relatively benign use of the public land, is now being shaped, directed and oftentimes characterized by new policies of this administration. We

believe strongly that the provisions that we have placed in the Interior appropriations bill are necessary, as I mentioned earlier, to block the administration's arrogant abuse of power and its failure to acknowledge that our States ought to have a say in the use of our natural resource bases.

During the past 175 years, the United States has undergone an astonishing period of physical and economic growth. We acquired the Louisiana territory, bought Alaska from the Russians, and fought a war with Mexico over the Southwest and California. During that time, Americans moved westward, pursuing dreams of economic independence and the opportunity to raise their families in a new land.

Our Government encouraged the westward movement of these hardy people by creating opportunity through the Homestead Act or the Timber and Stone Act or the mining law of 1872. These statutes, and others, were designed to encourage people to seek a new life, to build the wealth of a nation by developing its vast store of natural resources. And the effort was successful beyond any nation or any people's wildest dreams and imaginations.

Thousands of American farmers and shopkeepers and clerks and grocers and professionals took up the challenge and moved West. They busted the sod of the central plains and established an agricultural wonder, the breadbasket of the world, never known before by man. They established enormous cattle and livestock operations from Texas to Kansas and Montana and throughout the Rocky Mountain States, including my State of Idaho.

Thousands of prospectors fanned out across the West in search of gold, silver and other minerals. What these early miners found at Sutter's Mill in California or at Telluride in Colorado or at Silver City in Nevada or in the Boise Basin of Idaho, and hundreds of other boomtowns across the West, galvanized the Nation.

Thousands more ordinary Americans got caught up in the gold rush, too. Most were not successful in finding their bonanza. Instead, they formed the backbone of the new West because they brought other skills and talents with them. These are the people who built the great cities of Denver, Salt Lake City, Boise, Helena, Houston and San Francisco. They became the merchants, the bankers, the doctors, and the educators who helped ensure the success of the intermountain and the coastal west.

These Americans built the great transcontinental railroad to bring additional settlers into the growing cities and towns and to move the exploding basket of western-produced goods to the markets of the East.

Throughout the balance of the 19th century, as well as the 20th century, both Federal and private lands in the West contributed mightily to the economic success of our great Nation. In

addition to gold and silver, deposits of lead, nickel, molybdenum, iron, and other minerals were discovered and developed.

In the 1920s and 1930s, oil and natural gas deposits were found in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Utah and New Mexico. And, of course, the forest products and the livestock industries continued to grow and to prosper providing building materials and food for our growing Nation.

These achievements were not realized by the U.S. Government but by the women and the men who accepted the challenge who had the vision and who had the courage. They took enormous risks. And with their lives and with their fortunes they built new businesses, opened mines, started ranches and farms, and began new lives and created a new culture, a tradition, a western culture tradition, based on wise and sustainable use of the land and its resources.

Mr. President, I can talk about this firsthand. My own family is a part of that tradition of independence and determination. One hundred years ago next year, my grandfather set foot in Idaho and took advantage of the Homestead Act and began to build a ranching operation that flourished and raised a family with that ranching operation to be passed on to a future generation.

The western tradition recognized the value of land and its resources and the need to husband those resources carefully and sustainably. No one can honestly believe that we who live on and depend on these precious lands would seek to strip them of all of their values and deny their use and their beauty to the rest of Americans. You see, my granddad taught my father that tradition; and my father taught me that the land was a sacred resource that should be managed wisely.

Indeed, with forest products, mining, oil and gas production, and other forms of resource-intensive multiple uses in place, recreational opportunities began to flourish, began to increase. More and more Americans are coming to enjoy the natural beauty and the resources of the intermountain West. They come to enjoy our hunting and our fishing, our sightseeing, our camping, our mountain climbing, and to just be plain quiet; in other words, to search for and find solitude.

These opportunities were once available only to those of us who lived in these great States of the West—the Idahos and the Wyomings and the Montanas and other Rocky Mountain and Pacific States—or to the wealthy who could afford the time and expense associated with recreational journeys to our States.

Now our recreational-based economies have grown greatly and are supplementing our traditional economies devoted to forest products harvest, mining and agriculture. In fact, last year about 8.1 million visitors came to my State of Idaho alone. That

is more than six times my State's population of 1.2 million.

Federal law acknowledges and encourages the diverse activities that take place on the lands about which I have talked. It has formalized the concept in a policy called multiple-use which was defined in the Multiple-Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960 to mean managing the natural resources in our public forests for the combination of uses that best meet the needs of the American people. It has long been recognized that multiple-use policy is in the best public interest because it enables the resources to continue to produce benefits while conserving the value of that resource.

Mr. President, while all of this suggests the western public land States are enjoying a life of beauty and economic success, I want to let my colleagues and the rest of America know that we in the West are facing a terrific threat. Unfortunately, that threat is our own Federal Government and the policies of this administration.

When the current administration took office, the Federal agencies responsible for managing Federal lands began an all-out assault on the concept of multiple-use in favor of preservation and limited use. They have relentlessly pursued a philosophy of returning these lands to something they call "presettlement conditions."

They have shut out local governments from land use planning decisions. They have reduced Federal land managers to messengers delivering land use policy decisions from Washington, DC, down to the local level, as if Federal authorities here know best how to manage specific tracts of Federal forest or other Federal land units.

This arrogant behavior is not occurring just in Idaho but it is represented and reflected across the public land States of the West. The Forest Service is proposing to limit boating experiences on the Snake River in Idaho. The Service is trying to remove from use thousands of acres of grazing land in Arizona and New Mexico through a concept and a contract with environmental groups, ignoring current permittees and State governments and the historic laws and policies formulated and passed by Congresses and by this Congress.

Also, having been denied the opportunity to shut down the mining industry by Congress' refusal to accept punitive changes in the mining law of 1872, Secretary Babbitt has stopped new mining activities on public lands by slowing the permit process to a crawl. And when he must operate within the context of the current law, he hops on a soapbox on Wall Street and demagogues the very action that the laws require him to take. As a result, no new jobs are being created and no new revenues are coming to either the States or the Federal Treasury.

Mr. President, some Federal use managers and national environmental groups also have stymied local efforts

to resolve disputes over how to manage Federal lands. A group called the Quincy Library Group, encompassing forest product company employees and local authorities and environmentalists, developed a plan to protect roadless areas and old growth areas in the Plumas and Lassen National Forests in northern California while still allowing selective cutting on about 240 million board feet of forest products.

The Forest Service dragged its feet, would have nothing to do with the concept or the idea. It had to be changed here by the legislative effort. And let me tell you how popular it was. It passed the House by a 429-1 vote. It is pending here in the Senate. The administration was dragged into it kicking and screaming because the public outcry for the support of this balanced policy was so great.

Mr. President, another example of the arrogance of this administration's approach to land use policy is its decision to declare by proclamation a new unit in the protection category of Federal lands, the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. If you haven't heard about this, you haven't been listening to the cries coming from the West. The President unilaterally took 1.7 million acres of Federal and State land and included these acres in a new monument without consulting any of Utah's elected officials—not one, not Senator BENNETT nor Senator HATCH nor Utah's three Members in the House, not Utah's Governor. In fact, no one—well, except a few local environmental groups—knew of the President's plan, the plan that we only heard about when he stood on the banks of the Grand Canyon to proclaim it on the eve of his last election.

Now, as chairman of a Public Lands Subcommittee here in the Senate, I held hearings on a Utah wilderness bill. The State of Utah had worked to incorporate all interests, from the grassroots to the very highest levels of their Federal delegation, to try to preserve this area. They had been working on the way that public policy should appropriately be formed. Yet the President, with the sweep of a pen and the denial of local input, decided that he alone would lock up this land.

At a hearing on May 1, 1997, on legislation introduced to make sure that the President keeps his promise he made to Senator BENNETT, Louise Liston of Garfield County, UT, the local community elected commissioner said:

We feel that the creation of this monument was deliberately fabricated behind closed doors without consulting or notifying any member of the Utah congressional delegation, the Governor, or any local official. I have no doubt that history will single it out as the best or perhaps I would say the worst example of the entire Clinton Presidency of irresponsible and indefensible policy making in the natural resource area. I certainly would hope that we do not see anything worse in the next 4 years.

I could go on and on with examples, and there are many. However, several

of our colleagues have now joined me. I know they have other topics to visit that demonstrate the misguided positions of this administration.

Mr. President, I turn to Senator SESSIONS.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. I thank the Senator from Idaho for sharing this information with us. I have, of course, in the course of my tenure as Senator in the last 2 years, had some of the same experiences in Alabama with plans for managing Federal lands. I believe we can do a better job of it. I thank him for sharing that with us.

This morning, the President has appeared at the United Nations and spoken to that body. While he is there, I hope he will take the time to take a second look at his proposal to build a new United States mission office at the United Nations.

The Environmental and Public Works Committee, on which I serve and which deals with public buildings, had hearings last week and was asked to approve a resolution which would allow funding to be provided to design a new Federal building to house the U.S. mission to the United Nations. The Clinton administration's proposal makes clear that frugality and respect for the taxpayers' money is not a part of this plan.

The current building, which is just 40 years old, is located at 799 United Nations Plaza, just across the street from the U.N. building in New York. The prospectus, the proposal, of the General Services Administration, who had managed the building of the new structure, requests our committee to approve a plan that would call for the demolition of the existing building and the construction of a new building which would be the most expensive office building per square foot the U.S. Government has ever built.

I asked Ambassador Burleigh and the representative from GSA about this. They did not dispute my assertion that this would be, in fact, the most expensive office building in history. According to the General Services Administration, the U.N. mission building total project costs for the 141,000-square-foot building would amount to \$53 million, or \$378 per square foot.

However, this estimate does not tell the whole story. The rest of the story is that there is another part of the Federal Government that will be contributing to this situation. The State Department is seeking an additional \$24 million to spend on security, telecommunications, and the overall State Department oversight of this construction. These additional costs will bring the total project costs for this United States mission—which is really an office building—to the United Nations to at least \$77 million, or a whopping \$548 per square foot.

To put \$548 per square foot into perspective, consider that the Islip, NY, courthouse, complete with all kinds of

security features to keep judges and juries and defendants separate within its halls, came in with a total project cost of \$262 per square foot, and that was extraordinarily expensive.

The Foley Square Court House in New York City, accused by many to be grossly overpriced and a waste of taxpayers' money, has a record project cost of \$440 per square foot.

Now, courthouses are somewhat expensive. They are and should be august buildings. Courtrooms have to have high ceilings. You don't want a big courtroom looking like a little office space. You do need to have some marble, good paneling, big courtrooms. Every judge needs a courtroom to try the case and do the people's business. So courthouses are not really good comparisons to an office building because they ought to be more expensive. But this \$548 exceeds any Federal courthouse expenditures we have.

Now, they say, this is in Manhattan and real estate is expensive there and that explains the cost of this building. But that is not so because we already own the land. This land was given to the United States for the U.S.-U.N. mission office by the Rockefeller family many years ago. So we have no real estate costs in this project.

The U.S. mission to the U.N. building would be 141,000 square feet; the occupiable square footage, according to General Services Administration and the Department of State, would be 107,000 square feet for its 292 current employees. Now, that would amount to 366 square feet for each employee. My colleagues should note that in our offices here in the Russell, Hart, and Dirksen Buildings, we have a number of employees and we have a lot of visitors. Our occupiable square footage—and we have checked it for my staff and myself—is 131 square feet per employee. That is about one-third of what they are asking for in New York, and they are spending \$548 per square foot.

Before we move ahead and authorize the construction of the most expensive building ever constructed by the taxpayers that I am aware of, a mere office building, we need to be certain that this tremendous expense is justified and that all other options—including maybe releasing some space nearby for certain parts of the operation, if they need more space or renovation, if that is the appropriate thing, they have been examined closely and have proven not to be workable, and that there is no other way to build this building for less cost. I can't imagine there would not be. Just because the staff at the United Nations are involved in important issues does not mean they are masters of the universe and does not mean that they are entitled to palatial accordance.

Most of us in our personal lives have to deal with housing that is less than we desire. Our offices have to be less than we wish we could afford. Families and businesses all over America have to make tough choices. Working Amer-

icans do it every day. They ask whether they should buy a house with that one more bedroom so their children won't have to share a bedroom. They worry about that kind of thing, and rightly they should. They are frugal, they work hard, and they have a huge tax burden. Our people have to work until April, or later, every year just to pay their taxes—before they even start making money for their own families.

I think we have a responsibility. I ran for office just 2 years ago and I traveled all over my State of Alabama and talked to people. They are willing to pay some money up here and send tax money up here, but they want it used wisely. They want it to be used—if we have a surplus—to strengthen Social Security and pay down our debt. They want us to give them some tax relief. They don't want us to be spending this kind of money on office space when we don't need to. I believe it is a very important issue. And I see other buildings of that kind.

We have the Patent Office Building that is coming in and coming through our committee at an extraordinary cost in itself, and it is right here in Washington, DC. I think we are going to have to give a real hard look at the Patent Building. A lot of people are concerned about that.

People have raised a lot of concern about the \$400 million cost overrun on the big Reagan Office Building here in Washington, DC. It is a magnificent building, but it was expensive. I just had the numbers on it. It is right here, three blocks from the White House, which is some of the prime real estate in America. In this Reagan International Trade Center Building, which will house nearly 7,000 Federal employees, the concrete used in the building would pave 106 miles of a two-lane highway. The atrium ceiling, with 1,240 pieces of glass, is 125 feet high. The basement is 7.7 acres. That building comes in at \$264 per square foot, which is less than half of what they are talking about for a little office building in New York City, and it would house 7,000 employees.

So, Mr. President, these are matters that symbolize to the American people whether or not we in this Congress are managing their money wisely. It is a solemn commitment, a deep commitment that I have, and I hope every Member of this body has, and the President ought to have—how we are going to manage their money, and manage it wisely, is a responsibility that is deep.

I wish that all Americans could have a nice home. I wish every American could have a mansion. They won't have it in this life, but I wish it were possible. But we have to make compromises with reality. We don't have enough money to do everything we would like to do.

Mr. President, I will just say this. The President is in New York today. I hope he has had an opportunity to review this proposal that is being sent

forward. I believe our committee, which may be voting on it this week, needs to give it a very hard look. I, for one, have not been convinced at all by our hearing last week that this is justified. I intend to do all I can—and I think others will join—to make sure we don't rush into this kind of boondoggle and take money from decent, hard-working Americans to fund a palace at the site of the United Nations.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I want to tell Senator SESSIONS how well he serves the taxpayers of our country and this Congress for bringing these issues to the floor. We do not, at a time of fiscal austerity and attempting to balance the budget and stabilize Social Security and strengthen it for the future and give some tax cuts, need to be committing ourselves to the building of palaces. I appreciate him bringing that issue to the floor, again, in the theme that there are other practices of this administration that deserve to be brought to the forefront for the American people to understand.

Let me turn to the Senator from Ohio, Senator DEWINE.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, let me begin by thanking my friend and colleague from Idaho, Senator CRAIG, the chairman of the Senate Republican Policy Committee, for arranging this opportunity to address some of the key accomplishments of the 105th Congress.

In just a matter of weeks, we will close the curtain on a productive and arguably historic Congress. Certainly, our most significant achievement was passage of the first balanced budget plan in a generation. Few pundits took us seriously when the Republican Congress came to power pledging to balance the budget by 2002. We were not only serious, but we're on the verge of success. A strong U.S. economy, spurred in part by a Congress committed to ending runaway deficit spending, has brought us to a balanced budget four years ahead of schedule. Now, for the first time, we're having debates on government surpluses, not government deficits.

We've changed the debate on taxes as well. Last year, we passed the first real tax cut in 16 years. We provided a \$500-per-child tax credit for working families; inheritance tax relief; capital gains tax relief; flexible individual retirement accounts (IRAs) to encourage savings; and Alternative Minimum Tax relief for all businesses—large and small. And we're far from finished. We're on the verge of putting an end to the marriage penalty, and giving small business owners and family farmers the ability to fully deduct health insurance—something that is long, long overdue. And I know the current occupant of the Chair has been very much involved with that throughout the years.

We've not only changed the Tax Code, we've also reformed the tax collector. Our IRS reform bill will put a

stop to IRS abuses against law-abiding citizens, create an improved management structure for the IRS, and establish new protections and rights for all taxpayers.

Ours has been an agenda designed to make a difference in the lives of ordinary Americans. I'd like to talk about three achievements I have focused on—issues that will improve and save lives, and further move our country forward.

JOB TRAINING

Let me begin with our long-overdue—and far-reaching—reform of our job training system.

Since coming to the Senate in 1995, I have devoted a great deal of my time to job training reform. Last month, these efforts paid off when the President signed our bill into law. I am convinced that its enactment came not a moment too soon.

Our economic future depends on a well-trained workforce. Employers at every level are finding it increasingly difficult to locate and attract qualified employees for high-skilled, good-paying jobs—as well as qualified employees for entry-level positions.

Right outside Washington, DC, in northern Virginia, 19,000 high-tech jobs remain unfilled because individuals lack the skills to fill them. However, even with this shortage here, I hear radio ads during my morning drive urging people to move to North Carolina to fill high-tech jobs there.

My home state of Ohio faces a similar challenge. Manpower Incorporated recently released a poll which indicated that the Dayton area had a bright future in terms of job growth: 42 percent of area companies plan on hiring more manufacturing workers. However, the availability of skilled workers to fill those jobs remains low.

And, according to the Manufacturers Alliance's Economic Report published in January, the mismatch between available jobs and available skilled workers is growing. While wages have increased for those who have the skills in demand, many jobs still go unfilled and the median duration of unemployment for those who lack the skills remains at recession levels.

Nationwide, the number of unfilled high-tech jobs is estimated to be 350,000. The increasing labor shortage threatens our Nation's economic growth and productivity.

Clearly, we need to do much more to prepare America's workers for tomorrow's jobs. The problem is our job training system is not simply up for the challenge. That is what our bill aims to address.

The current system is a fragmented and duplicative maze of narrowly focused programs, administered by numerous Federal agencies that lack coordination, lack a coherent strategy to provide training assistance, and lack the confidence of the two key consumers who use these services—workers seeking training, and businesses seeking to hire them.

That's why our reform bill is so important. It will fundamentally reform

our ineffective job training programs, transforming them into a coordinated, accountable, and flexible workforce investment system.

The historic 1996 welfare reform bill was based on the principle that power ought to be devolved to States, communities, and individuals. It should go back to the local community. Our job training bill represents the final, essential chapter of welfare reform, by empowering States and localities—giving them the tools and flexibility they need to implement real reform, reform that will allow them to move people off welfare and into good-paying permanent jobs.

The bill promotes free market competition, eliminates government bureaucracy and promotes personal responsibility. It provides training assistance through individual training accounts or vouchers, in order to allow individuals seeking assistance to have a say about where, how, and what training they will receive. These programs should be tailored to individual needs, not to Washington bureaucracies.

This legislation will help real workers and real businesses build America's economy. One major Ohio newspaper called it "a bill that works." That's exactly right. The Congress can be very proud of this legislation.

SAVING KIDS

Let me now turn to a second piece of very important legislation this Congress can be proud of.

I might say this is a piece of legislation that my colleague from Idaho, LARRY CRAIG, was so very instrumental in getting passed. I don't think it is really a stretch at all to say that but for LARRY CRAIG this bill would not have been law—would not have been passed by this Congress, and would not have been signed by the President.

Let me tell the Members a little bit about it.

Last November, we passed a bill that will enable more of America's children to grow up in safe, stable, loving, and permanent homes.

Far too many children are spending their most important, formative years in a legal limbo that denies them their chance to be adopted—that denies them what all children should have—the chance to be loved and cared for by parents.

We are also sending too many children back to dangerous and abusive homes. We send them back to the custody of people who have already abused and tortured them.

Every day in America, three children actually die of abuse and neglect at the hands of their parents or caretakers. That's over 1200 children every year. And almost half of these children are killed after their tragic circumstances have come to the attention of child welfare agencies.

Why is this happening? Obviously, many factors are to blame. There are many excuses. But as we were working on our bill, it became increasingly

clear that some of the tragedies in the child welfare system are the unintended consequences of a small part of a 1980 Federal law. Under this law, for a state to be eligible for federal matching funds for foster care expenditures, the state must have a plan providing that "reasonable efforts will be made (A) prior to the placement of a child in foster care, to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from his home, and (B) to make it possible for the child to return to his home." These are "reasonable efforts."

In other words, no matter what the particular circumstances of a household may be—the state had to make reasonable efforts to keep it together, and to put it back together if it falls apart.

There is strong evidence to suggest that in practice, reasonable efforts have become extraordinary efforts. Efforts to keep families together at all costs.

Our bill changed the law in order to change this practice, to make it absolutely clear that the best interests of the child come first. This new law simply states: "In determining reasonable efforts, the best interests of the child, including the child's health and safety, shall be of primary concern."

With this new law, Congress put children first. This is a law that I believe will truly save young lives. It is a law that Congress should be very proud of.

WAR ON DRUGS

Finally, let me turn to the third item of which I think this Congress can be very proud. I would like to talk about the progress Congress has made in saving young lives from the often fatal scourge of illegal drugs.

Last year, I joined with my friend from Iowa, Senator GRASSLEY, and my Ohio House colleague, Congressman ROB PORTMAN to introduce and pass the Drug-Free Communities Act which supports community-based initiatives to educate children about the dangers of drugs. Youth substance abuse has more than doubled in the past five years. We must do more to protect our children from this threat to their health and safety. We believe that this bill will strike a major blow for our children's interests by empowering the people who work with our children on a daily basis, at the grass roots, at the community level in our neighborhoods.

Drug prevention is an important element of any comprehensive children's health policy. And in the long run, treatment and education is our best investment in getting serious users off drugs. However, to be successful now and over the long term, we need a balanced anti-drug strategy. We must have a strong commitment in each of the following areas: prevention, treatment, education, domestic law enforcement, and international eradication and interdiction efforts.

Over the last few years, our efforts to keep drugs from coming into the country have been lagging seriously behind the other components of our drug

strategy. And the results of this imbalance—this lack of emphasis in international eradication and interdiction—has been devastating: A decline in cocaine seizures, a decline in the price of cocaine, and an increase in drug use. This alarming trend has to change, and requires leadership here in Washington. While drug education, treatment and domestic law enforcement are efforts done at the federal, state, and local levels, the Federal government is solely responsible to keep drugs from entering our country.

That is our responsibility solely, and it cannot be shared. And if we in Washington fail to do our job outside the country, we're making it far more difficult and far more costly for state and local governments to do their part.

This past July, Congressmen MCCOLLUM and HASTERT, and Senators COVERDELL, GRAHAM, GRASSLEY, and I introduced the Western Hemisphere Drug Elimination Act—legislation designed to restore a balanced drug control strategy, and revive our sole responsibility to stop drugs from reaching our borders. This legislation calls for an additional \$2.6 billion investment in international counter-narcotic efforts over 3 years. Specifically, the bill calls for a comprehensive eradication, interdiction and crop substitution strategy. The objective is to dramatically reduce the flow of drugs into the United States by driving up the price of drugs and hence reducing drug consumption. I believe that through this legislation, we can accomplish this very important goal.

We have to make it far more difficult for drug lords to bring drugs to our nation, and make drugs far more costly to buy. We need to raise the cost of doing business for drug traffickers.

Our bill would do this. It was passed by the House of Representatives just last week, and I have been working with my fellow cosponsors here in the Senate to increase funding for drug interdiction programs during the current appropriations process.

This effort is one key example of how this Congress has made a huge difference in the lives of America's children.

Mr. President, all of the measures I have just discussed have one thing in common: They are components of an overall vision of what our country can be—the kind of country our children deserve. I am very proud to have been a part of all these efforts, and I look forward to making further progress on these and other issues as we continue to make a positive, lasting difference in the lives of all Americans in the 106th Congress.

Again, I thank my colleague from Idaho for arranging the time, and I congratulate him for the role he has played in all three of these bills and these efforts. I yield the floor.

Mr. CRAIG. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from Ohio for those kind remarks. If it had not been for his leadership in the key areas he mentioned,

we would not be dealing with them in the way this Congress is now and should be. These are the kind of programs that directly impact the lives of many of our citizens, and Congress should be aggressively pursuing many of the projects and pieces of legislation that the Senator from Ohio has discussed.

I now turn to Senator GRAMS from Minnesota who, I understand, wants to talk to us about tax cuts.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Minnesota.

TAX CUTS AND THE GOOD GOVERNMENT AMENDMENT

Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to talk a little bit about tax relief and the obligation I feel this Congress has to the American people in the remaining days of this session.

I also compliment the Senator from Alabama, who now occupies the Chair, for talking about the need to be better stewards of the tax money we do collect from Americans today.

Instead of beginning with the American experience, I will start overseas for just a moment, and that is in Japan.

After years of rapid economic growth, which many called an "economic miracle," Japan's economy is now stagnating. To a large degree, the sickening Japanese economy has dragged the world economy down with it.

The U.S. government has been pushing Japan to pursue vigorous reforms to boost the economy again. One of the recommended measures is tax relief. President Clinton and Secretary of the Treasury, Robert Rubin, have repeatedly asked Japan to permanently reduce its income tax. As a result, the Japanese government proposed a tax cut of 7 trillion yen, but it is now suggested that this tax relief is too small and that deeper cuts are needed. I think this is a sound policy and the right approach to helping cure Japan's ills and I commend the administration for such advice. I just wish they would have that same advice for Congress. The question is, if tax relief will work for Japan as it has worked for many other countries, including our own during the Reagan administration, why do we not we pursue that same policy here in this country once again?

Mr. President, what these two events tell us is, first, the Federal tax burden has grown too high, too ridiculous. And second, the best solution to maintaining economic growth in this country is tax relief.

We have debated this issue in this Chamber again and again and the conclusion is clear to me: a high tax burden distorts economic behaviors. It discourages work, saving, and investment. It slows productivity and growth and decreases our competitiveness. Tax relief, on the other hand, does just the opposite. It will benefit millions of American families and will keep our economy healthy and strong.

Mr. President, I firmly believe that it is still critical to provide meaningful tax relief for the American people this year. The average American family today spends more on taxes than it does on food, clothing, and housing combined. A typical median-income family can expect to pay nearly 40 percent of its income in Federal, State, and local taxes. This means more than 3 hours of every 8-hour working day are dedicated just to paying taxes. In 1996, an average household with an annual income between \$22,500 and \$30,000 paid an average of \$9,073 for food, clothing, and housing, and paid \$11,311 in total taxes. Households with incomes ranging from \$45,000 to \$60,000 averaged \$16,043 for basic necessities, and paid the tax collector \$25,276.

If the "hidden taxes" that result from the high cost of government regulations are factored in, a family today gives up more than 50 percent of its annual income to the Government.

When the Government takes more, families get less. Between 1989 and 1995, the typical American family's real income fell by 5.2 percent. Most economists point out that the decreased income was the result of slow economic growth, a direct result of higher Federal taxes.

The American taxpayers desperately demand real tax relief and reform. They ushered in a new congressional majority in 1994 on our pledge that we would provide that relief. While we have delivered on a portion of our promises, much work remains to be done. Reforming the tax system for the taxpayers who sent us here begins with cutting their taxes. Our mission has not yet been completed.

We should not walk away from our obligation to the American taxpayers to pursue a Federal Government that serves with accountability and leaves working families a little more of their own money at the end of the day. We must pass meaningful tax relief this year.

In the next 5 years, for example, the Federal Government will take in more than \$9.4 trillion from the pockets of the American people. The Congressional Budget Office has projected that in the next 10 years, we will have a \$1.6 trillion budget surplus. Even after excluding the Social Security surplus, we will still have a surplus of \$169 billion. The Government has no claim on any surplus because the Government did not generate it—it will be the result of the hard work of the American people, and it therefore should be returned to them in the form of tax relief.

I agree that reforming the Social Security and Medicare programs to ensure their solvency is vitally important. Any projected budget surplus should be used partly for that purpose. Yet, I believe strongly that the surplus alone will not save Social Security and, therefore, fundamental reform is needed to change it from a pay-as-you-go system to a fully funded one.

What truly bothers me, Mr. President, is Washington's continuation of